

R6 EJ Annual Reports Request Submission (10/17)

Crossett, Arkansas

EPA has been working in Crossett, Arkansas, to address concerns related to air emissions and water discharges since February 2014. Crossett has a population of about 5,500 residents and is located in southeastern Arkansas just nine miles north of the state's border with Louisiana. Residents from one of Crossett's predominantly African-American neighborhoods have been concerned for many years about hydrogen sulfide emissions from the local paper facility. They formed Crossett Concerned Citizens for Environmental Justice (CCCEJ) to help their efforts with the facility, which includes a paper mill, plywood mill (currently inactive), and two chemical plants. EPA worked in partnership with State agencies, local officials, and the community to address their concerns. Region 6 drafted the Crossett Community Action Plan and Arkansas Environmental Justice Collaborative Action Plan to identify actions to be taken with its partners and to report progress to all stakeholders. A 10 year review of sanitary surveys and Consumer Confidence Reports for the four public drinking water systems that serve the Crossett area showed that the drinking water systems were in compliance with all state and federal drinking water rules. Additionally, in 2016, at EPA's request, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) and the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) completed a health consultation on community drinking water and health outcomes to determine if potential cancer exposure risks existed and determined that the drinking water posed no risk to public health.

EPA has also worked to bring the community's concerns directly to the local paper facility, by participating in public meetings with the community, state and local officials and the company as well as organizing a meeting with CCCEJ and company representatives in an effort to improve communication and cooperation. EPA's enforcement staff also conducted comprehensive inspections of the facility to evaluate compliance with Clean Air Act requirements resulting in several corrective actions. EPA's coordination with ADEQ and the facility has resulted in several air-monitoring projects to better understand hydrogen sulfide emissions with the most recent air monitoring project being completed in June 2017. Results from this project are currently being analyzed. Region 6 continues to build on its previous collaborations with ADEQ by encouraging them to integrate EJ principles into their permitting processes and using other tools like EJ Screen and giving guidance on improving their Title VI program.

Donna Reservoir and Canal System

The Donna Reservoir and Canal System Superfund Site (Site) is located in Hidalgo County, Texas, near the Texas/Mexico border. The local irrigation district pumps water from the Rio Grande River and transfers the water through several miles of canals, including a reservoir (i.e., lake), for irrigation and drinking water supply. The canal system is contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in the surface water, sediment, and fish. Local residents catch and consume contaminated fish from the canal system despite an "Aquatic Life Order" issued by the State in 1994 which declared the irrigation system a prohibited area for the taking of all species of aquatic life. The EPA is working with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality on developing the Proposed Plan for the Site which describes the EPA's preferred cleanup option.

Since 2008 the EPA has conducted five fish removal actions to prevent consumption of contaminated fish. Over 42,000 fish have been removed from the system and a public outreach program has focused on informing the public to avoid fishing in the system. Despite these efforts, people continue to consume fish possibly contaminated with PCBs.

City of Anthony, NM

The city of Anthony, NM, an underserved colonia incorporated in 2010, encompasses 4.0 square miles and a population of 9,363. The City is located approximately 24 miles northwest of downtown El Paso, TX and 23 miles south of Las Cruces, New Mexico and is bordered by rural communities and farms, desert lands, and sits on the NM-TX state line. As a newly incorporated municipality, the city faces problems with sustained economic development and long term community development challenges redeveloping vacant parcels, funding for new and maintaining existing infrastructure, and improving conditions of substandard and aging housing. The city's real property consists of a Municipal Complex, library and baseball field and they have identified the need for an updated master plan, parks and recreational facilities, uses for a vacant and underutilized downtown, sidewalks especially on school routes, and desires to annex nearby land which would double the size of the city.

As a Making a Visible Difference community, the city of Anthony received Brownsfield Inventory Technical Assistance from the R6 Targeted Brownfields Assessment & Land Revitalization Coordinator via Kansas State University (KSU) Technical Assistance for Brownfields (TAB) communities. This spearheaded the Rio Grande Council of Governments efforts as they worked with a developer to develop Main street. EPA's Office of Sustainability provided technical assistance that utilized elements of the Green and Complete Streets and the Linking Land Use and Water Quality tools, and identified key community issues, prioritized goals, and specific actions to achieve more complete streets and advance green infrastructure practices within the community. A November 2016 Small MS4 Working Collaboratively Workshop provided by New Mexico Environment Department's Surface Water Bureau and R6 water quality staff focused on local strategies oriented towards protecting water quality and a July 31- August 2, 2017, Design Workshop on Smart Growth Implementation, explored opportunities for actions and created visual renderings for two key city corridors and gateway locations. The City is now knowledgeable on next steps on how they could support more environmentally and fiscally sustainable growth, highlighting specific code and policy options.

Alexandria/Pineville, LA

EPA Region 6 provided assistance to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) for the regulatory oversight of two creosoting facilities, one in Alexandria and the other in Pineville as part of on-going cleanup efforts. About 26,600 low income and minority persons in Alexandria and Pineville live within a 2-mile radius of each creosoting site. Under the Making a Visible Difference initiative, EPA used a collaborative approach to address the multiple environmental issues in the community, improve internal/external communications and bring concepts of sustainability to the community. The Community Sustainability Network, a network of members from the community and industry, was developed to discuss and resolve community issues. EPA also hosted a Healthy Homes and Healthy School Training that was conducted by the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit in Alexandria, LA and assisted the

Alexandria/Pineville Making a Visible Difference Cross divisional team in helping to create a safer environment for children in the community.

To address community concerns of potential impact on children's health from the facilities sampling events were conducted in Hunter Park, Pineville Soccer Park and at Rapides Training Academy. Initial sampling events conducted in the parks and training academy indicated the presence of dioxin/furans, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and polychlorinated biphenyls in the school yard at the Rapides Training Academy. Additional sampling using a new sampling methodology determined that dioxin levels in the school were within safe risk levels. The LDEQ collected 24-hour air sampling data from the mobile air monitoring laboratory (MAML) from both creosoting sites from 2013-2015. The data collected was sent to the state Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) for review and the results were posted to LDEQ's electronic data management system (EDMS) in June 2017. The Community Data Assessment Report, which summarizes the focused projects carried out since 2015, is in the process of being finalized with LDEQ.

EJSCREEN

Region 6 worked with the Office of Environmental Justice to provide EJSCREEN training for 46 Region 6 employees from the Enforcement, Water, Permits, Superfund and NEPA Programs to help gauge, identify, prevent and address environmental justice issues and allow for enhanced communication and awareness on overarching environmental issues and activities. For hands on experience, the training consisted of case studies on sites for Superfund, NPDES, RCRA and Air which motivated employee utilization of the tool in it day to day work.

EPA staff in Region 6 used the EJSCREEN tool for train-the-trainer; drafting NPDES Permits for New Mexico and several tribes in Region 6; collaboration with the States of Texas and Louisiana emergency response for Hurricane Harvey to screen geographic locations for overburdened populations who were disproportionately exposed to or at risk from different types of pollution, site locations identification, targeting, education and outreach audience and assessment. Over 300 EJ Screens of areas of potential concerns were conducted in compliance, targeting and enforcement activities. EJSCREEN Lead Paint indicator is used by the Lead Paint Renovate Right Program as a guide in our four unauthorized states to identify potential lead paint concentrations in older homes. EJSCREEN has also aided in the distribution of environmental educational materials to localities where the materials would be the most effective.